1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 888 young man's. The man, almost eighty, did not want to remain idle. "Time enough to sit by the fire in the winter," he would say. The greatest compliment the neighbors had for them was: "Look at the C——s. Old Johnny gives his boy a hand with everything. You wouldn't know which one has the farm."

592 888 606 The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. Disputes arise, as the provisions made in the "writings" indicate. The following quotation from an official with years of experience in dealing with country people illustrates:

> As years go on, either the parents die or, if they live sufficiently long, they receive the old-age pension. Before they are qualified for this, the farms have to be made over to a son or daughter. This is done on the occasion of the son's marriage. The father reserves to himself and his wife the use of a room and the freedom of the kitchen, and they are entitled to all their food. The points were carefully discussed at length in the process of matchmaking, and the family of the future wife had no hesitation in agreeing, realizing that such points formed the final phase of a cycle of life on the farm. If the daughter-in-law has been well and properly advised by her mother, she immediately on her arrival in the new house submits tactfully to all proposals of her mother-in-law and lets the old lady feel that she is still the master mariner. If she didn't, it would cause a lot of trouble, as sometimes happens.

[626] In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law in the new household, and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control.

[577] An open breach between the two couples is universally condemned, of course; "turning the old people out on the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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side of the road" has occurred, although the authors found no instance of it. If, however, the new family finds the old too great a burden, the old may go to the County Home, where the poor and derelict old people are maintained. A grave stigma of inability to support one's duties still attaches to this.

It is interesting that the old-age pension, originally designed in Great Britain to support the aged members of an industrial population and extended some years later to Ireland, has been incorporated into Irish farm life without upsetting, but rather reinforcing, the matchmaking pattern. The tendency is now to turn the farm over to the son as soon as the father passes his seventieth year. Receipt of the pension facilitates the maintenance of the old people and hastens the transfer of land to the son, as the farmers must divest themselves of their small farms in the majority of cases in order to become eligible for the pension.

Even from the point of view of the household expense, the pension is very welcome. In the words of one farmer:

> To have old people in the house is a great blessing in these times because if you have one, it means ten bob a week and, if you have two, it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'D— and every Friday he will go to Corrofin [town] to collect his ten bob and he may buy a couple of bottles of porter, but spend the rest on things for the house and then come home with a few shillings which will go into the common fund.
>
> Not only that but it adds at least ten years to a man's life because the anticipation that each Friday he is to get ten shillings will cheer him up and keep him keen. Any house which has one old person is well off in the last few years, and, if there are two, it is a great blessing.

But the blessing the pension represents is more than an economic aid in bad times. It plays a great role in the transition the match brings about in family relationships. As one countrywoman phrased it:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 888 737 578 There is no chance that the old people would give up the land but for the pension, and there is no hurrying them. Before the old-age pension the father would keep the fat of the land and there would be argument between them, the young woman and the old woman slashing each other with tongs, the doors broke, and it would be two dwellings in the house, like, but since the old-age pension, there are no rows and, if there are, then they make it up with the old people for the ten bob a week.

592 888 If the transition is smooth, there need be no such violence of dispute as the last quotation describes. Each of the members of the household must adopt a new role in relation to the others. The old man abdicates his controlling position with his transference of the farm to his son. Usually such a change goes smoothly enough. If the son can still seem to defer to superior experience and judgment and refer decisions to the old man, all goes well. The happiest compromise is that suggested in the statement of one countryman:

> Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what he thought I should do for the day, and the old man would say that it is now time to do this or that or that the cows should have something done for them or the garden should be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty to thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then go about my own business.

592 606 It is in the feminine province of farm work and household control that the transition is most difficult. Under the patrilocal type of marriage here described, the bride is a stranger and of necessity cannot rely upon the experience of an association of years in order to meet the new conditions, as can father and son. In the graphic phrase of the people, she is the "new woman."

For her the transition brings a violent uprooting from prior attachments. Unlike her urban sister, she has little of the ideal of romantic love to help her over the crisis. Consequently her introduction into the new household is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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gradual, and her assumption of her new duties takes place over a moderately lengthy period. Two considerations, of course, are her primary inspiration in moments of stress: first, that she is now a fully adult woman with a household of her own although she must still share its control with her mother-in-law; and second, that the customary usage of the countryside provides her with an occasional escape back to her own people still on the farm at home. The following quotation expresses one woman's remembrance of her emotional difficulty. It is interesting that it is given expression most effectively in terms of Christmas, the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland:

> When I first came here, I didn't like it; I thought I couldn't stand living here, and I was always wanting to go home. I could go home, then, every fortnight. Now it doesn't matter so much and I go home about twice a year. I especially miss home at Christmas time because it is then that you miss those you always used to see, and Christmas doesn't seem right if they are not in it.

But for the bride, as for the old people, the transition brings forth a new behavior, and a new habit in her relationship with them. She must learn a nice balance between her new freedom and new full status and the continued control and the vested interest of her mother-in-law. It is a matter between the two women of the household; the father and son prefer to remain neutral witnesses to the process. The statement of one countryman illustrates well the possibilities and the type of new attitude and behavior the young woman must learn to make a satisfactory adjustment:

> When a marriage is made, an agreement is drawn up so that the man hands over to his son the land, but makes certain reservations. A new woman is brought into the house. The wife may have modern ideas and be "hoity-toity" about the way to do things, and the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man without interfering would light his pipe and go out until the squabble was over.

592 It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and
●606 leave and go live with her daughter. She would do this if the
578 mother of her daughter's husband were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house. But squabbles are bad things and, if the new woman would ask the old persons their opinion and how to do this and that, there would never be any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she pleased and the old people would think that she was doing it the way that she said. The daughter-in-law, if she did what she ought, would do this and treat the old folks nice.

[521 The theme of strife between mother and daughter-in-law
522] is one dear to the hearts of the countrymen. It appears very frequently in conversation and in jokes. If the family is to continue its existence, the introduction of the new woman
[626] must be effected smoothly. The whole moral force of the community as well as the interest of family harmony bear upon the two women. The fear of gossip in the neighborhood operates strongly to keep the young woman with her husband, and every family makes a strong attempt to hide its personal troubles as much as possible from the general knowledge of the community.

Nevertheless, stranger as the new woman may be, the norms of the community in ordinary cases demand that the young husband take the part of his wife. The bond between them is stronger than that between son and parent. As the quotation above shows, it is usually the mother who must leave. The country people deplore such an event, but they know that the son "has right" in so doing. Many statements of this attitude are to be heard among the small farmers and any examinations of cases of dispute which end in rupture show the attitude to be enforced in reality.

That this should be the case reflects the function of the marriage and matchmaking of the farm family. It provides for continuance.

592 The new position of the old couple and their desires in
888 the altered situation which has seen their displacement ex-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 342 775 888 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

581 842 606 183 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

606 842 183 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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people are a great help to the mother, because the old woman would nurse the youngsters and see they didn't fall into the fire or something of that nature. The old man would keep on at his work just as long as he was able because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. The old woman would help in the house. If there was a squabble between the mother and the daughter, the old woman would be more likely to stand up for the daughter. She would also teach her how to do things and have more patience than the mother. The grandfather would show the boy how to do things and would have more patience than the father."

Accordingly, the chief duty of the 'new woman' is to bear children. She succeeds or fails as a supplier of new persons to the family. Only with children can the new balance complete itself and the essential social continuity be assured.

The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law upon her success in this role. The first year of the girl's marriage is a time of apprenticeship. Her work is light. Highly ceremonialized custom grants her an occasional escape back to her own people. Her major duty is pregnancy, and the old couple watch her like a hawk for signs of fertility. All during her child-bearing years the old people will help her, praising her in terms of her increase, and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as she does herself.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 593 606 842 One countryman of North Clare put that first year into words: "At first", he said, "the boy's people make much of the new woman. They would hardly let her work at all. This carries on for seven or eight months, and if then the old people don't see evidence of increase of young, they get angry and abuse her. But if they do, they don't let her do any work at all now and are so proud."

In such a situation barrenness is a curse and a disgrace. The husband has every right to express his disappointment and his displeasure. It is a source of shame to him as well. He fails in preserving the continuity of his line upon the land.

One childless woman of Inagh in Clare knew bitterly how much both family and community support these attitudes: "No matter how much money you have," she said, "no matter how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you are no good. But if you are ugly as the worst and have children, you are all right." Then she went on, to perpetrate an Irish bull, perhaps, but to express the matter very forcibly: "The man wants children just as much as the woman. He is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of this country, especially if you haven't any."

182 593 428 Nevertheless, there are other ways of ensuring the continuity. They 'keep the name on the land' too, but they are makeshifts at best. These makeshifts transfer control of the land, as does the match.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

858 842 162
Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

593 861
Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864] elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155] and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593 bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582] to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood. "This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606] law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother'" (Humphreys 1965:246).

593 [828]
Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the household, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household. Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155] rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562] with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the [831]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[3]

As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculcation of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[3] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision